



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**CITY COUNCIL CONFIRMS MARK KELLY AS COMMISSIONER  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

City Council today approved Mayor Rahm Emanuel's appointment of Mark Kelly as the new Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). Kelly brings to the role a lifelong career in arts education and more than 30-year career in arts development in Chicago.

"Throughout his career, Mark Kelly has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to providing access to arts and culture for students and residents across the city," said Mayor Emanuel. "Mark's deep experience in the arts and academics will allow Chicago to continue expanding cultural experiences across all of our neighborhoods for residents and visitors from around the world to enjoy, and will further Chicago's status as a global destination for the arts."

Kelly replaces Michelle T. Boone, who served as Commissioner since 2011 and stepped down earlier this year to pursue other professional endeavors.

In his new role, Kelly will lead DCASE in presenting and promoting the City's many free festivals, exhibitions, performances and holiday celebrations in parks, the historic Chicago Cultural Center and other venues throughout the city. Additionally, Kelly will lead his team in designating 2017 as the "Year of Public Art" across the city, with dozens of events and exhibitions highlighting the City's vibrant arts and culture scene to be announced soon.

Before accepting the Mayor's appointment as the new commissioner, Kelly served as the Vice President for Student Success at Columbia College Chicago, where he fostered and oversaw an immersive arts experience for Columbia's burgeoning student body, across its 100 different degree programs. For more than 30 years, Kelly served in numerous leadership roles at Columbia, supporting students who view the world through a creative lens in attaining a world-class education that blends creative and media arts, liberal arts and business.

Kelly has amassed more than 40 years of experience working as an academic administrator, with prior positions at Wayne State University and City Colleges of Chicago. Kelly is founder and chair of the Wabash Arts Corridor (WAC) initiative, framing the South Loop as a hub for street art, installations and spectacle, and is founder of the Halloween Gathering, an annual parade and festival celebrating Chicago's cultural communities. Throughout his career, Kelly has served on

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many arts and cultural-centric boards, with active roles on the following: Arts Alliance Illinois Board; the Chicago Loop Alliance Board; and America's Urban Campus Committee. Kelly holds a master of arts in counseling from the University of Cincinnati and a bachelor of arts in sociology from John Carroll University.

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